



California's Statewide Judicial Need

**Assessing Judicial Workload in the Trial Courts
from 2004 to 2007**



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE PROGRAMS DIVISION

Judicial Workload in California

This report was prepared as part of a presentation to the Judicial Council of California by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Office of Court Research on February 23, 2007. The principal contributors were Chris Belloli and Kevin O'Connell. For additional copies of this report, please contact Shaunese Henderson at (415) 865-7454.

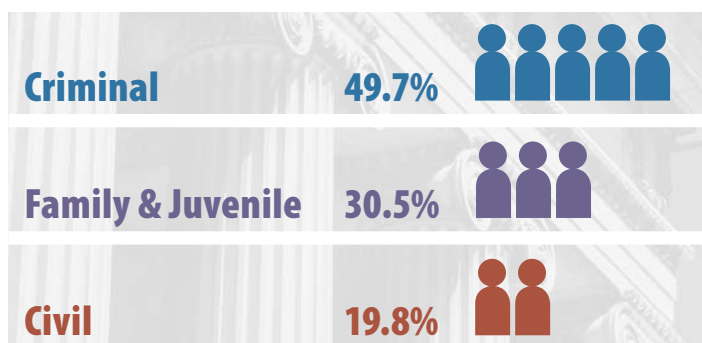
Highlights

- Judicial workload, measured by Assessed Judge Need (or AJN, see below), increased by 3% from 2004 to 2007.
- Current AJN suggests the need for 2,332 judicial positions, which is over 350 positions more than the number of positions currently authorized in California.
- 46 courts experienced a growth in judicial workload from 2004 to 2007; many of these courts were already significantly under resourced in 2004.
- Several courts experienced significant growth in AJN from 2004 to 2007, most notably Fresno (7.7 positions), Placer (8.2), Riverside (12.1), Sacramento (12.8), San Bernardino (6.1), and San Joaquin (6.0).
- Criminal cases made up almost half (49.7%) of judicial workload in 2007, followed by family and juvenile cases (30.5%) and civil cases (19.8%).

Calculating Assessed Judge Need (AJN)

- A time study of more than 300 judicial officers was used to determine the amount of time that judicial officers spend on 18 different case types.
- These time estimates were used to create case weights so that filings data can be converted to estimates of judicial workload.
- The workload required to process the existing caseload is calculated on the basis of three-years' average filings data to minimize the impact of short-term fluctuations in filings data.
- These data are converted into an estimated number of judgeships by evaluating the amount of time available to judicial officers in a given year.
- The number of Authorized Judicial Positions (AJP) in each court is subtracted from the judicial need (AJN) to determine the gap.

2007 Judicial Workload Composition



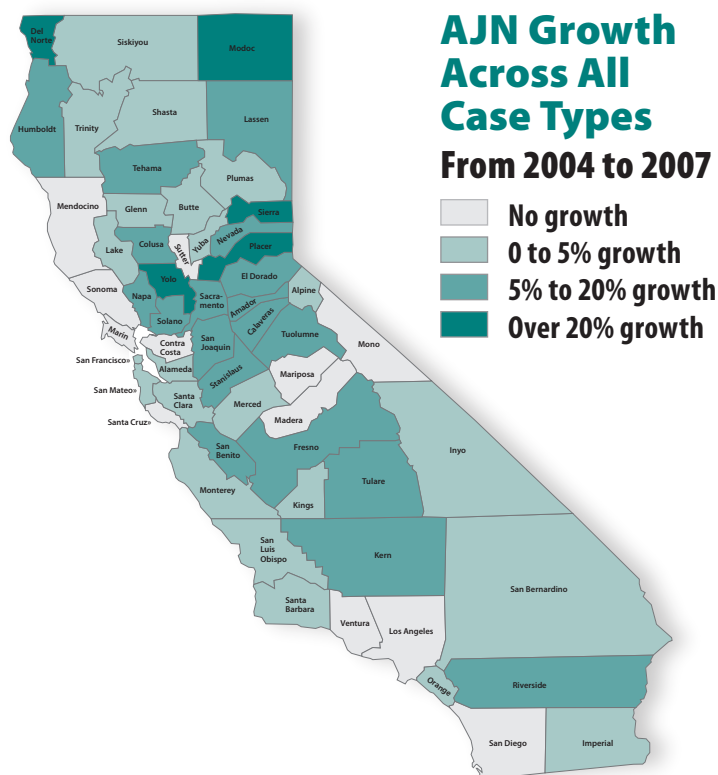
For a detailed analysis of workload by case type, see pages 4 to 6.

Assessed Judge Need (AJN) in California

County	Assessed Judge Need (AJN)		Change from 2004 to 2007*	
	2004	2007	Number	%
Statewide	2,270.5	2,332.3	+ 61.8	+ 3%
Alameda	81.8	83.5	+ 1.7	+ 2%
Alpine	0.2	0.3	+ 0.0	+ 3%
Amador	2.5	2.9	+ 0.4	+ 17%
Butte	16.5	16.6	+ 0.1	+ 1%
Calaveras	2.8	3.0	+ 0.2	+ 6%
Colusa	1.7	1.8	+ 0.1	+ 5%
Contra Costa	51.7	47.2	- 4.5	- 9%
Del Norte	3.2	5.0	+ 1.8	+ 57%
El Dorado	9.0	10.7	+ 1.7	+ 19%
Fresno	67.0	74.7	+ 7.7	+ 12%
Glenn	2.4	2.4	+ 0.1	+ 3%
Humboldt	9.0	9.8	+ 0.8	+ 9%
Imperial	11.6	11.7	+ 0.1	+ 0%
Inyo	1.9	1.9	+ 0.1	+ 4%
Kern	55.9	59.6	+ 3.6	+ 7%
Kings	11.2	11.4	+ 0.3	+ 2%
Lake	5.7	5.9	+ 0.2	+ 3%
Lassen	2.9	3.2	+ 0.2	+ 8%
Los Angeles	620.9	609.7	- 11.2	- 2%
Madera	13.1	12.6	- 0.5	- 4%
Marin	12.1	12.0	- 0.1	- 1%
Mariposa	1.3	1.1	- 0.2	- 19%
Mendocino	7.3	6.9	- 0.4	- 6%
Merced	19.5	20.2	+ 0.7	+ 3%
Modoc	0.7	1.8	+ 1.1	+ 165%
Mono	1.1	1.1	- 0.0	- 3%
Monterey	25.5	26.5	+ 1.1	+ 4%
Napa	7.9	8.4	+ 0.5	+ 6%
Nevada	5.8	6.1	+ 0.3	+ 6%
Orange	155.2	158.5	+ 3.3	+ 2%
Placer	17.1	25.3	+ 8.2	+ 48%
Plumas	1.8	1.9	+ 0.0	+ 1%
Riverside	121.2	133.3	+ 12.1	+ 10%
Sacramento	102.9	115.7	+ 12.8	+ 12%
San Benito	3.0	3.4	+ 0.4	+ 13%
San Bernardino	139.2	145.2	+ 6.1	+ 4%
San Diego	162.4	159.4	- 2.9	- 2%
San Francisco	63.9	64.7	+ 0.8	+ 1%
San Joaquin	46.5	52.5	+ 6.0	+ 13%
San Luis Obispo	16.8	17.5	+ 0.7	+ 4%

County	Assessed Judge Need (AJN)		Change from 2004 to 2007*	
	2004	2007	Number	%
San Mateo	33.1	33.1	0.0	0%
Santa Barbara	24.3	25.3	+ 1.0	+ 4%
Santa Clara	90.3	90.8	+ 0.5	+ 1%
Santa Cruz	15.8	15.6	- 0.2	- 2%
Shasta	17.1	17.2	+ 0.2	+ 1%
Sierra	0.3	0.4	+ 0.1	+ 44%
Siskiyou	4.2	4.3	+ 0.1	+ 3%
Solano	29.5	31.3	+ 1.9	+ 6%
Sonoma	29.4	28.6	- 0.8	- 3%
Stanislaus	34.0	36.5	+ 2.5	+ 7%
Sutter	7.6	7.1	- 0.4	- 6%
Tehama	5.6	5.8	+ 0.3	+ 5%
Trinity	1.2	1.2	+ 0.0	+ 2%
Tulare	32.3	34.6	+ 2.3	+ 7%
Tuolumne	4.5	5.2	+ 0.7	+ 15%
Ventura	39.4	37.1	- 2.4	- 6%
Yolo	13.0	15.9	+ 2.9	+ 22%
Yuba	6.6	6.8	+ 0.2	+ 3%

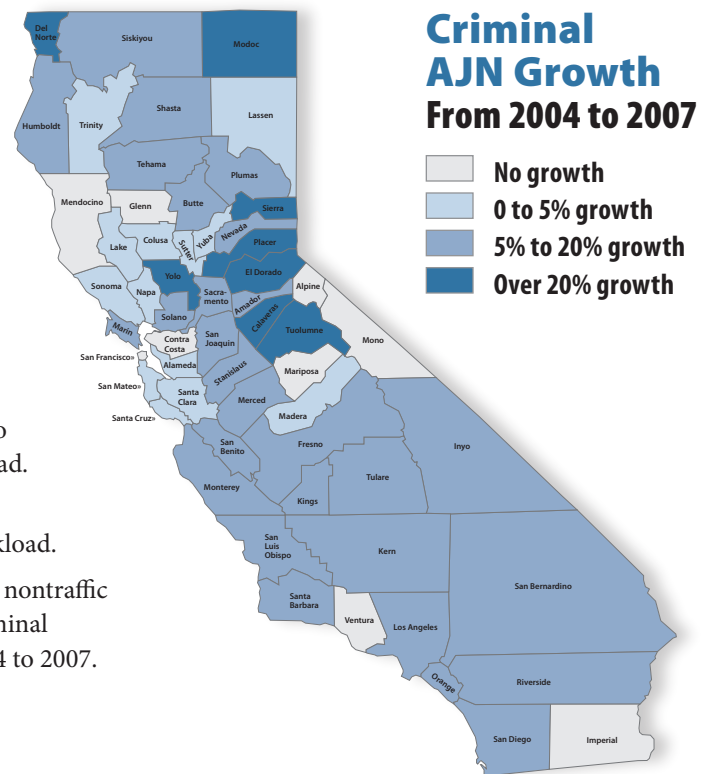
*Number and percentage changes may not correspond exactly due to rounding.







Criminal Workload in California

Highlights

- Judicial workload, measured by Assessed Judge Need (AJN), increased for every criminal case type from 2004 to 2007.
- Total criminal workload increased by 8 percent from 2004 to 2007, with 49 courts experiencing growth in criminal workload.
- Felony cases, the most work-intensive type of criminal case, make up 60 percent of the current criminal workload in the courts.
- Total felony workload increased by 11 percent from 2004 to 2007, with 52 courts experiencing growth in felony workload.
- Misdemeanor workload increased from 2004 to 2007 and currently makes up almost one-third of total criminal workload.
- Although the vast majority of criminal cases are traffic and nontraffic infractions, they represent less than 10 percent of total criminal workload; however, this workload also increased from 2004 to 2007.



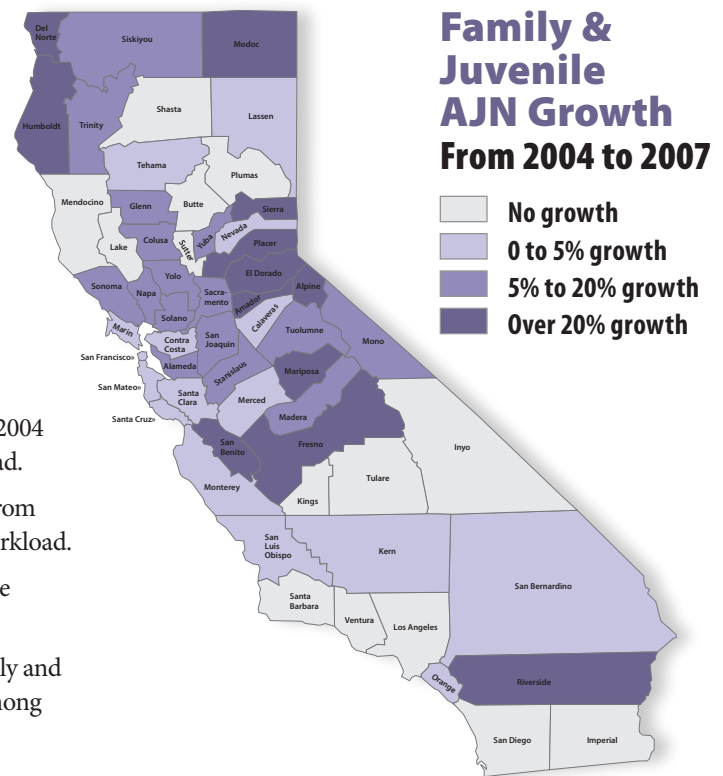
Criminal Assessed Judge Need (AJN)

	2007 Workload Composition	2007 AJN	% Change from 2004	Courts with Growth
Total	100%	1,159	+ 8%	49
Felony Criminal cases alleging an offense punishable by imprisonment in a state prison or by death.	60% 	698	+ 11%	52
Misdemeanor A&C Work-intensive misdemeanor cases including nontraffic misdemeanor violations of the Penal Code and other state statutes (Class A) and violations of Vehicle Code § 20002—hit and run, property damage—§ 23104—reckless driving, causing injury—and § 23152—DUI—(Class C).	29% 	341	+ 3%	34
Traffic infractions Traffic-related violations of state statutes or city or county ordinances specified as infractions, excluding parking violations.	6% 	74	+ 7%	46
Misdemeanor B&D Relatively less complex nontraffic (Class B) and traffic (Class D) misdemeanor cases.	3% 	39	+ 9%	36
Nontraffic infractions Nontraffic violations of state statutes or local ordinances specified as infractions.	0%	4	+ 4%	34
Criminal habeas corpus A writ of habeas corpus for release of a person imprisoned or whose liberty is restrained or for conditions of confinement (Pen. Code, § 1473).	0%	3	+19%	40






Family & Juvenile Workload in California

Highlights

- Judicial workload, measured by Assessed Judge Need (AJN), increased for every family and juvenile case type from 2004 to 2007.
- Total family and juvenile workload increased by 3 percent from 2004 to 2007, with 44 courts experiencing growth in family and juvenile workload.
- Judicial workload for family law cases and other petitions increased slightly from 2004 to 2007 and currently makes up 64 percent of the family and juvenile workload in the courts.
- Juvenile dependency workload increased by 6 percent from 2004 to 2007, with 39 courts experiencing growth in their workload.
- Juvenile delinquency workload also increased by 6 percent from 2004 to 2007 with 32 courts experiencing growth in their workload.
- Although probate and guardianship workload did not change statewide, 30 courts did experience growth in this workload.
- Mental health workload makes up only 4 percent of the family and juvenile workload in the courts, but grew the most (26%) among family and juvenile case types from 2004 to 2007.



Family & Juvenile Assessed Judge Need (AJN)

	2007 Workload Composition	2007 AJN	% Change from 2004	Courts with Growth
Total	100%	712	+ 3%	44
Family Law and Petitions Proceedings in which a petition has been filed for dissolution or voiding of a marriage or for legal separation, and other petitions such as domestic violence petitions and petitions filed by the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) for reimbursement of child support.	64% 	459	+ 1%	39
Juvenile Dependency Petitions filed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 300, seeking to make a minor child a ward of the court because of abuse or neglect.	17% 	119	+ 6%	39
Juvenile Delinquency Petitions filed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 602, alleging violation of a criminal statute, and petitions filed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 601, alleging that a minor is beyond the control of parents or guardians but has not violated any law.	11% 	75	+ 6%	32
Probate and Guardianship All probate proceedings, will contests, guardianship and conservatorship proceedings (including conservatorship proceedings under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act), and petitions to compromise minors' claims (when not part of a pending action or proceeding).	5% 	34	0%	30
Mental Health Proceedings to detain a person under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act; proceedings to examine or detain a person as a mentally retarded individual, a narcotic addict, a mentally disordered prisoner at the time of parole or termination of parole, and proceedings to determine the current sanity of a criminal defendant.	4% 	25	+ 26%	38








Civil Workload in California

Highlights

- Total civil workload decreased statewide by 9 percent from 2004 to 2007, though 15 courts experienced growth in civil workload.
- Judicial workload for motor vehicle and non-motor vehicle torts decreased from 2004 to 2007. Combined these cases make up over one-third (36%) of the total current civil workload.
- Other civil complaints, which is the most work-intensive type of civil case, make up 24 percent of total current civil workload and increased since 2004.
- Even though workload for unlawful detainer cases decreased statewide from 2004 to 2007, half of all courts statewide experienced an increase in workload.
- Workload in limited civil cases had the highest increase since 2004 of all civil case types.
- The workload for small claims and lower court appeals decreased statewide since 2004.



Civil Assessed Judge Need (AJN)

	2007 Workload Composition	2007 AJN	% Change from 2004	Courts with Growth
Total	100%	462	- 9%	15
Non-Motor Vehicle Torts All actions for damages in excess of \$25,000 for physical injury to persons and property and all actions for wrongful death except those related to motor vehicle accidents.	28% 	129	- 11%	10
Other Civil Complaints Cases over \$25,000 not covered in any other civil case category, including complaints for declaratory relief only, mechanics' liens, and petitions for partnership and corporate governance.	24% 	110	+ 1%	38
Other Limited Civil All civil matters with a value of \$25,000 or less, except unlawful detainer and small claims matters.	19% 	86	+4%	33
Small Claims All matters filed in small claims court (value of \$7,500 or less).	12% 	55	-10%	10
Motor Vehicle Torts Actions for damages in excess of \$25,000 for physical injury to persons and property and actions for wrongful death related to motor vehicle accidents.	8% 	38	-37%	5
Unlawful Detainer Actions involving the possession of real property by a commercial or residential tenant whose original entry was lawful but whose right to the possession has terminated.	8% 	39	-3%	29
Lower Court Appeals A proceeding for direct review of a civil or criminal judgment from a limited-jurisdiction case.	1% 	5	-260%	12

For More Information

The full text of the 2007 update of the judicial workload assessment can be found at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/reports/022307item9.pdf.

The Office of Court Research (OCR) collects and analyses data to improve the administration of justice. The OCR provides technical assistance to the trial courts, conducts original research to inform policy, and serves as an information clearinghouse and research consultant to the Judicial Council.

The Office of Court Research has developed several standard reports that highlight short-term and long-term caseload trends in the trial courts. These reports are posted on the password-protected web site of the judicial branch, Serranus (<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtresearch/data.htm>) and can serve as a tool for informing court management and planning decisions as well as for data quality control purposes. A brief summary of these reports is provided below.

JBSIS Standard Reports

This report provides easy access to data on case filings and dispositions for major case categories in the trial courts over the last 10 years. The data source is the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS) data warehouse.

Quarterly Management Reports

This report focuses on monthly filings and disposition data most recently reported to the AOC and contains data flags to assist courts in identifying changes in caseload over time. This quarterly report can serve an important quality-control function since the data flags highlight changes that are atypical of any given month.

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CHRIS BELLOLI
Senior Research Analyst

HILARY HEHMAN
Research Analyst

SHAUNESE HENDERSON
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Graduate Student Assistant

DAG MACLEOD
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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102-3688
www.courtinfo.ca.gov